

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

A 287.1
St 1

**ASCS
BACKGROUND
INFORMATION**

BI No. 8

U.S.D.A.
NAT'L AGRIC LIBRARY
RECEIVED
OCT 3 1979
PROCUREMENT SECTION
CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

1780412

United States Department
of Agriculture

Agricultural Stabilization and
Conservation Service

JUNE 1979

EMERGENCY CONSERVATION PROGRAM

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) provides emergency funds for sharing with farmers and ranchers the cost of rehabilitating farmland damaged by wind erosion, floods, hurricanes, or other natural disasters, and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures during periods of severe drought.

The natural disaster must be such as to create new conservation problems, which, if not treated, would: (1) impair or endanger the land; (2) materially affect the productive capacity of the land; (3) represent unusual damage which, except for wind erosion, is not the type likely to recur frequently in the same area; and (4) be so costly to repair that Federal assistance is or will be required to return the land to productive agricultural use. Conservation problems existing prior to the disaster involved are not eligible for cost-sharing assistance. ECP is administered by Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation (ASC) State and county farmer committees working under the general direction of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Emergency Conservation Program was established by the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978, Public Law 95-334, Title IV, U.S.C. 2201. This Act authorizes financial assistance for emergency measures in any State or area which has experienced a disaster of such magnitude that emergency measures are required, as determined by the ASC county committee in consultation with the ASC State committee. Funding for the program is appropriated, on an annual basis, by the Congress.

Prior to passage of the 1978 Agricultural Credit Act, emergency conservation measures were authorized by Public Law 85-58, the Third Supplemental Appropriation Act, enacted June 21, 1957. The 1978 Act gives ECP continuing legislative status and provides new authorities, in addition to the assistance authorized under the earlier legislation.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Subject to the availability of funds, the ASC county committee, in consultation with the ASC State committee, is authorized to implement the ECP for eligible farmers for all disasters except drought. When severe drought conditions exist, the determination to implement drought practices will be made by the Deputy Administrator, State and County Operations, ASCS. Cost-share levels up to 80 percent are set by the county committee. Lower levels may be established by State and county committees.

Eligibility for ECP assistance is determined by the county committee on an individual basis, taking into account the type and extent of damage. The county committee or its representative makes an "on-site" inspection of the area prior to approving the request to determine if the damage is of sufficient magnitude to warrant cost-sharing. Individual or cumulative requests for cost-sharing in excess of \$10,000 per person per disaster require prior approval of the State committee. (A person is defined as an individual, group, partnership, corporation, or other legal entity owning or operating a farm or ranch.) Technical assistance is provided by the Soil Conservation Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Emergency practices approved to rehabilitate farmland damaged by wind erosion and other disasters, including drought, may include debris removal, providing needed water for rangeland management, fence restoration, grading and shaping of farmland, restoring structures, and water conservation measures. Other emergency conservation measures may be authorized by the county committee with approvals by the State committee and the Director, Conservation and Environmental Protection Division, ASCS, to develop a special practice needed to rehabilitate damaged farmland not covered by one of the approved practices.

Farmers or ranchers may enter into pooling agreements to jointly solve mutual conservation problems.